

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of the claims is intended to replace all previous versions and/or listings of the claims in the present application:

Claim 1 (Cancelled)

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

Claim 3 (Cancelled)

Claim 4 (Cancelled)

Claim 5 (Cancelled)

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

Claim 7 (Cancelled)

Claim 8 (Cancelled)

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Original) A dental system for positioning teeth comprising:

a removable tooth positioning appliance for aligning teeth of a patient; and

an apparatus comprising a handle portion, a member extending from the handle portion and having a distal end, and an engagement block having a tapered edge for engaging an edge of the tooth positioning appliance, the engagement block protruding from the working portion at or near the distal end.

Claim 11 (Original) The system of claim 10 wherein the removable tooth positioning appliance is an aligner that fits over a plurality of teeth.

Claim 12 (Original) The system of claim 11 wherein the apparatus further comprises a stop block protruding from the member so as to form a recess with the engagement block, the recess adapted to receive the edge of the tooth positioning appliance when the tapered edge is used to remove the tooth positioning appliance from the teeth of the patient; the engagement block protruding from the member at an approximately 90 degree angle; the member comprising a substantially L-shaped section having a vertical portion and a horizontal portion, the distal end being located on the horizontal portion; the distal end of the member having a planar surface; and the wherein the tapered edge is tapered toward the distal end.

Claim 13 (Original) A method of removing a removable tooth positioning appliance from teeth of a patient comprising:

providing an apparatus having a handle portion, a member extending from the handle portion and having a distal end, and an engagement block having a tapered edge, the engagement block protruding from the member at or near the distal end;

positioning the tapered edge of the member near an edge of the tooth positioning appliance;

inserting the tapered edge between the tooth positioning appliance and the teeth of the patient; and

exerting force to the handle portion thereby causing the tooth positioning to release from the teeth of the patient.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~ 13 wherein the force exerted to the handle portion is in a direction substantially parallel to the teeth of the patient.

Claim 15 (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the apparatus further comprises a stop block protruding from the member so as to form a recess with the engagement block, the recess adapted to receive the edge of the tooth positioning appliance when the tapered edge engages the tooth positioning appliance; the engagement block protruding from the member at an

approximately 90 degree angle; the member comprising a substantially L-shaped section having a vertical portion and a horizontal portion, the distal end being located on the horizontal portion; the distal end of the member having a planar surface; and the wherein the tapered end is tapered toward the distal end.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended) The system ~~apparatus~~ of claim + 10 wherein the engagement block of the apparatus has a substantially rectangular cross section.

Claim 17 (Newly Added) The system of claim 10 wherein the engagement block protrudes from the member at an approximately 90 degree angle.

Claim 18 (Newly Added) The system of claim 10 wherein the apparatus is constructed of plastic.

Claim 19 (Newly Added) The system of claim 10 wherein the tapered edge of the apparatus is tapered away from the distal end.

Claim 20 (Newly Added) The system of claim 10 wherein the tapered edge of the apparatus is tapered toward the distal end.

Claim 21 (Newly Added) The method of claim 13 wherein the engagement block protrudes from the member at an approximately 90 degree angle.

Claim 22 (Newly Added) The method of claim 13 wherein the apparatus is constructed of plastic.

Claim 23 (Newly Added) The method of claim 13 wherein the tapered edge of the apparatus is tapered away from the distal end.

Claim 24 (Newly Added) The method of claim 13 wherein the tapered edge of the apparatus is tapered toward the distal end.